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JOHN M. DANIEL'S

WATCH-KEY,

A MEMOIR OF THE LATE
EDITOR OF THE RICHMOND EXAMINER.

J
BY DR. GEORGE W. BAGBY,
EDITOR OF THE NATIVE VIRGINIAN.

LYNCHBURG, VA.
J. P. BELL & CO., PUBLISHERS.

JOHNSON & SCHAFFTER, PRINTERS,
Nos. 60 and 62 Market Street.



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PREFACE.

IN December of last year, soon after the publication of the "LATCH-KEY" in the *Native Virginian*, I visited the city of Richmond, and, while there, was convinced that I had made, unwittingly, two decided errors: First, JOHN M. DANIEL did not write "The Parliament of Beasts." The real author is known, but his name is withheld, for sufficient reasons. Second, the walk to Petersburg was made, not for the purpose of lending, but of *paying* money which the Editor of the *Examiner* had collected for his friend, the then Artist, PETICOLAS. This I learned from the diary which DANIEL kept at that time, and which Mr. T. H. WYNNE has now in his possession. In respect of other matters of fact, I believe the Memoir is substantially correct. It is reprinted now in pamphlet form, for the benefit of many who were unable to obtain the back numbers of the *Native Virginian* which contained it, and in response to their repeated solicitations.

ORANGE C. H., VA., *February 18, 1868.*

G. W. B.



JOHN M. DANIEL'S LATCH-KEY

SOME days ago, I found in an old drawer, the latch-key, which the editor of the Richmond *Examiner* gave me in 1863. It fitted the door of the house on Broad street, opposite the African church—the house in which he died. A bit of brass, differing in nothing from others of its kind, this key, nevertheless, has its charm. It is the only souvenir I have of one of the most remarkable men Virginia ever produced. Coming upon it unexpectedly, after I had given it up as lost, the bare sight of it crowded my mind, in an instant, with pictures of its former owner. I saw him in Washington, just after his return from Europe, conversing with SEDDON and GARNETT; in his own room over the *Examiner* office, as he sat lord-like, in a high arm-chair, in August, 1861, questioning me about the battle of Manassas and exhibiting the major's uniform, which he intended to wear as Aid to Gen. FLOYD; in the editorial room, cutting and slashing leaders, which had been written for him, or denouncing fiercely the Administration; at his dinner-table, pledging WIGFALL and HUGHES in a glass of old Madeira; in the bed, where he lay wounded, after the duel with ELMORE; and last of all, I saw his marble face—how changed! as he lay in his metallic coffin, March the 31st, 1865.

All these likenesses of this strange man came vividly before me as I looked at the key of his door, and with them came a host of recollections, some of which I am now about to set down. Not that I have anything to tell which others could not tell as well, or better than myself. For it must not be inferred because he gave me the privilege of entering his house at any hour of the day or night that pleased me, that I was the intimate personal friend of JOHN M. DANIEL. No; he took a short-lived fancy to me, and gave me his latch-key; that is all. While

the fancy lasted, I used the key but seldom, and after it died out, not at all. Doubtless he soon forgot that he had ever given it to me. My aim is simply to put down in chronological order, a number of incidents and sayings illustrative of the character of one who, in some respects, resembled JOHN RANDOLPH, of Roanoke, and who, like RANDOLPH, was of a nature so peculiar that the most trivial reminiscences can hardly fail to prove interesting to hundreds of thousands in the South, and to not a few in the North.

My acquaintance with him began in Washington, after his return from Turin. He registered his name at Brown's Hotel in a small hand, simply as "Mr. DANIEL, Liverpool." Although I had never seen a scrap of his writing, I knew the moment I saw his name on the register, that the man for whom so many were anxiously looking, had arrived. The next evening, I was introduced to him. I had long been curious to see "the great editor," and availing myself of his animated conversation with other visitors, eyed him intently, seeking in the outward man some indication of the extraordinary being within. My search was not in vain. The poorest physiognomist could not have seen DANIEL'S face, even for a moment, without being attracted—I am tempted to say fascinated by it. True, we always find what we are taught to expect in a face, and often discover what does not exist; but here was a countenance singularly marked—a dark, refined, decidedly *Jewish* face. The nose was not very large, and but slightly aquiline; the mouth thin-lipped, wide, unpleasing, and overhung by a heavy black moustache; the chin square, but not prominent; the cheeks thin; and both cheeks and chin covered by a dense, coarse, jet-black, closely-trimmed beard; eye-brows very thick and black, shading deep-set, rather small hazel eyes; head as small as BYRON'S or BROUGHAM'S, beautifully shaped and surmounted by masses of hair, which in youth, hung long and lank and black to his coat collar; but in later life, was worn close cut. Such was JOHN M. DANIEL as he sat before me in a room at Brown's Hotel in the memorable winter of 1861.

He was richly but plainly dressed. He talked freely upon the topics then uppermost in every Southern mind, but there was a

hesitation, or rather a tripping amounting almost to a stammer in his speech—the result, probably, of his long residence abroad, and the constant use in conversation of French or Italian instead of the English language. This tripping had entirely disappeared when I met him a few months later in Richmond. It was not an affectation, as I had at first supposed.

During a number of interviews which I had with him in Washington, he was always courteous, good natured and talkative. His moroseness, his bitterness, of which I had heard so much, seemed to have been dissipated by the genial climate of Italy and the polite atmosphere of courts. One night, however, FLOYD'S name being mentioned in connection with the affair of the Indian Trust Bonds, some reckless person took it upon himself to say that in the public opinion the then Secretary of War was "no better than a thief." DANIEL flamed instantly. He rose from his chair with a white face and with trembling lips, and denounced the charge against Gov. FLOYD as an accursed slander. In proof that FLOYD had not appropriated to his own use one cent of the public funds, he stated a fact, not to be mentioned here, which seemed to carry conviction to all who heard it. He was very much agitated; his passionate nature so overmastered him that he could not, although he tried to resume his calmness, and the party soon dispersed from his room.

During his stay in Washington, which lasted two or three weeks, I met him but once after this exciting scene. He was then in Mr. SEDDON'S room, conversing with that distinguished member of the Peace Congress, and with the Hon. M. R. H. GARNETT. Late English publications, relating to Continental and British politics, were under discussion, and DANIEL showed himself perfectly familiar with every book or pamphlet which the other gentleman had read. Little was said so long as I was present about Federal politics. It cannot, however, be doubted that the Virginia editor was in the intimate counsels of the leaders of the southern movement, and that, while he gave them the benefit of his eminently clear intellect, he in turn was enabled by their information and opinions to post himself thoroughly on all those points which were shortly to be brought before the public in the columns of the improved and, for the first time, *Daily Examiner*.

The potent influence of this paper from the moment that DANIEL resumed the helm, was felt not only in Virginia, but throughout the entire South. To this day, the effect of a single article, which appeared a few weeks after the *Examiner* began to be issued daily, is remembered by almost every man, woman and child in Virginia. I allude, of course, to "The Parliament of Beasts," in which the members of the Virginia Convention, then in session, were likened to dogs, cats, owls, opossums, and other members of the animal kingdom. The likenesses were so happily and so trenchantly drawn that it was impossible to mistake them, and many hundreds, if not thousands, of copies of the issue containing the article were sold in a few hours. Some offence was given, but so much humor, and wit so genuine, were mingled with the satire, that the Union men, who were most offended, were obliged to join in the laugh at their own caricatures. "Who is the author?" was in everybody's mouth. This question was never satisfactorily answered. The article appeared as a contribution, but in editorial type, and the great majority of people suspected that DANIEL himself was the author. This, however, was denied, and many conjectures were made as to the man, in or out of Virginia, who was capable of doing so clever a thing. Two years or more after its appearance, while sitting alone with DANIEL, I asked him to tell me in confidence, who the real author was. He was pacing the floor of his *sanc-tum*, as was his wont. He stopped abruptly, put his hands in his pockets, turned his face towards me and said, with the utmost gravity:

"No one knows better than yourself who wrote that article."

"Nonsense," I replied; "I really want to know. Tell me. I pledge you my word that I will never reveal the secret until you give me permission to do so."

He looked keenly at me, as if to ascertain whether I could be trusted, and for a moment I felt sure that he was going to tell me; but turning suddenly on his heel, he began again to pace the floor in silence. He refused to tell me even the author of the periphrase in verse, which appeared some time after the original. I have scarcely a doubt but that he himself wrote the original in prose, and I think I can make a very good guess as

to the authorship of the poetic version. The latter I attribute to the same hand which penned "Fie! MEMMINGER," and similar articles in rhyme, which were printed in the *Examiner* during the years 1864-'65.

In May, 1861, I went to Manassas with the first battalion sent thither from Richmond. No sooner was I upon the ground than I felt, as by prescience, rather than by any comprehension of the strategic value of the position, that the place was to be the scene of a great battle; and shortly afterwards with the aid of my friend, Lieut. L——, embodied my views and apprehensions in an article of considerable length, which I sent to the *Examiner*—no order to the contrary having then been issued. DANIEL thought it imprudent to publish the article, but was so pleased with it that he continued to send me, as long as I remained at Manassas, five copies of his daily paper. He also offered me my own price for any letters I might choose to write him. Even had it been lawful, I could not have accepted his proposition, for the reason that the fatigues of incessant drilling left me little inclination and less ability to write even to my own father. But the prompt recognition of the little service I had rendered him—a promptness which, as I afterwards discovered, was characteristic of DANIEL—and doubtless a good deal of gratified vanity at the estimate he had placed on my contribution, impelled me to call on him as soon as I reached Richmond in August after the great battle.

He was then living in two rooms, handsomely fitted up, in the second story of the *Examiner* building. The front room he used as a bed chamber, the back room as a sanctum and a hall of audience for his many visitors. In the latter were a number of easy chairs; and one in particular, which he preferred above all the rest. It was a sort of barber's chair, covered with horse hair, and elevated much more than ordinary chairs above the floor. From this seat, as from a throne, he looked down upon and conversed with his visitors; and to me at least, (I know not how it was with others,) his words descended from their elevation with a certain authority, as from a true *cathedra*.

The day was warm, and the editorial Pontiff was by no means in his robes of office. He wore neither coat nor vest, only a

pair of white duck pantaloons. He looked spotlessly clean, cool, and comfortable. His reception was kind, almost to cordiality. He talked freely about the war, about the generals, and the plans of campaign, but was very guarded in his comments upon the Administration, which, up to this time, he had heartily supported. Indeed, the *Examiner* was, for many months after the war began, regarded as the organ of the Administration. Full of his expected campaign with FLOYD, he told me, with an air of satisfaction, how he intended to be comfortable and to escape the filth and misery of camp life. He was going *en grand tenue*—with a chest stored with the good things of this life, a tent of his own fashioning, a complete cooking apparatus, his own cook and his own valet.

I asked him if he had no fear of being killed or wounded. He replied that he did not think he would be killed, and that the chances were that he would not be wounded. "I hate pain," said he, "I cannot bear it, and yet I should like to be able to show an honorable scar in this cause." His campaign in Southwestern Virginia was not of long duration. I am satisfied from what he afterwards told me, that he joined Gen. FLOYD, not for a holiday, but with the purpose of winning military glory. He was ambitious in everything he undertook, and on more than one occasion he expressed to me a great regret at having left the army. "By this time," (the winter of 1864,) said he, "I might have been a brigadier—perhaps a major-general."

"But," said I, "as the editor of the *Examiner*, you are exerting an influence far greater than any brigadier—greater perhaps than any major-general."

"True," he answered; but what good is the *Examiner*, or any other paper, or all the papers in the Confederacy combined, doing? Besides, I like to command men. I love power."

After the interview in August, 1861, I saw very little of him for two years. I met him occasionally on the street, but his manner was so repelling that I was deterred from gratifying the desire which I often felt, of going to see him. With his old habits had come back his old ways—he was as cold, self-contained and gloomy as he had been before he went to Europe.

Affairs were not going in the fashion that suited him. Grave doubts were beginning to arise in his mind. He still had hopes, and often high hopes, of the success of the cause, but the course of the Administration excited continually the bitterness of his nature. Then, again, the whole weight of the *Examiner*, which he frequently described to me "as a mill-stone about his neck," was upon him. Convinced that his editorial labors were well nigh useless, in so far as they influenced the conduct of the war, the finances, or anything else pertaining to the policy of Mr. DAVIS, it was but natural that his mental energies should flag and his wonderful powers of composition should be abated. He was anxious to get an assistant, but could find no one to suit him. He had fallen out with one whose brilliant and humorous pen had served him so well in former years. EDWARD A. POLLARD was in ill health, and had started, or was about to start, for Europe, and he had not succeeded in getting the two or three writers, whose contributions, a few months later, added so greatly to the value and the interest of the *Examiner*.

It was at this time, in the summer of 1863, while on a visit to the country, that I amused myself, one evening, by writing a satirical article on the then exciting subject of the removal of the Quartermaster General. This I sent to DANIEL. What was my surprise by return mail, to receive from R. F. WALKER, the manager of the *Examiner*, a flattering letter, telling me of DANIEL'S high appreciation of my article, and his desire to secure my services as assistant editor. An engagement on another paper prevented me from accepting the proffered situation; moreover I knew well that DANIEL was a "hard master." Nevertheless, I was anxious to see in print an article which had received the approval of such a critic as JOHN M. DANIEL. I looked each day, but never saw it. I own that I felt chagrined. My only conclusion was that DANIEL, at a first reading, had overestimated the merits of the article, and that a subsequent perusal, revealing faults which he had not before detected, had determined him not to publish it.

On my return to Richmond, I felt little desire to meet any of the *Examiner* people; but, passing WALKER one day on the

street, he hailed me and told me to come to the office; he had some money for me.

“Money for what?” I inquired.

“For that article you sent down. Don't you remember it?”

“I remember it distinctly, but I also remember that you never printed it.”

WALKER was positive that the article had been printed, and I no less positive that it had not. Finally he referred me to Mr. DANIEL, and to him, accordingly, I went. He received me kindly, complimented my article extravagantly, as I thought; and asked me if WALKER had paid me for it. I was a good deal nettled, supposing that he was making fun of me. I told him in reply, that WALKER had offered to pay me much more than the article was worth, according to the established rates of the *Examiner* (which I knew) but that I had refused payment, on the ground that the article had never appeared. His eye twinkled mischievously, as he said:

“You didn't see it, because you didn't read the *Examiner*. The *Examiner* contains the best thoughts of the best minds in the Confederacy, expressed in the best manner—it is the organ of the thinking *gentlemen* of the country. You ought by all means to read it. There is the file; look at the number for——, and you will find your article.”

I looked, and sure enough, there was an article twice as long and twice as good as the one I had written—my own ideas, but so enveloped in DANIEL'S fine English, and so amplified that it was hard to recognize them.

I have purposely related this incident at some length, because it illustrates DANIEL'S character and unfolds one of the secrets of his great success as an editor. He begrudged no labor in elaborating and improving an article which pleased him. I remember his telling me that he had written a certain article over four or five times. The original draft was sent to him by a lady distinguished for her attainments and performances in literature. It was a defence of his favorite general. He was gallant to a degree and the warmest of partisans; and both his gallantry and his friendship being aroused, he exerted himself to the utmost to make the article as printed, a telling one. If I

am not mistaken, I have this identical article now in my possession. It is headed, *Ohe! jam satis*.

Although I would not accept the place of assistant, and could by no means have filled it to his satisfaction if I had, I was glad enough, in order to eke out my narrow living, to enter into an engagement to furnish him with two or three editorials a week—an engagement which lasted for several months. It was at this time that he gave me his latch-key and I became somewhat intimate with him. I made many visits to him at his house on Broad street; and had many talks with him on all sorts of subjects. He was not a secretive man; on the contrary, he conversed with the utmost freedom about himself, his early life, his residence abroad, his relations and friends, his political associates and opponents, indeed almost everything. Unless he happened to be out of humor, (which was not often the case at his private residence) he loved to talk; and though a recluse, he was delighted with the visits of gentlemen, who came without solicitation on his part and who called in a friendly and social way. He urged me to visit him at night, and in order to tempt me to repeat my visits, would give me, each time, what was then a great and costly treat, a bottle of English ale. This he repeated several times, but finding that I did not play chess and was a much better listener than talker, in fact, that I could not talk well enough to provoke him to talk, he soon became tired of my visits—a fact of which he gave me convincing proof by yawning in my face!

This house on Broad street and his mode of living, deserve notice. The house was of brick, three stories high, commodious and comfortable. It was one of a number of investments in real estate, which he made during the war. Although no human being but himself inhabited this house—the servants being restricted to the kitchen of four rooms in the backyard—he lived, literally, all over it. The front room on the first floor, was his parlor. In it, were two large oil paintings, works of decided merit, a mosaic chess table and a few mahogany chairs. Sometimes he received his visitors in the parlor, but more often in the dining-room adjoining, where he kept a table for writing and his iron safe. A handsome sideboard and a set of solid dining tables of antique pattern graced this apartment. He

was fond of telling that these tables once belonged to "old MEM-MINGER," and were bought when the worthy Secretary of the Treasury broke up house-keeping on Church Hill. The front room in the second story was his chamber, and the passage-room adjoining, his dressing closet. A tall mirror, which reached from the floor almost to the ceiling, was fastened to the wall between the two front windows. Hardby, was a large *cheval* glass, by means of which he was enabled to see his whole figure, front and rear, from head to foot. He was not a fop, but he was fond of dress and had an eye to appearance not only in person but in print. He had a horror of slovenliness. A carelessly written editorial was his abomination. He used to say that a man who goes into print ought to remember that he is making his appearance before the very best society, and that he owes it both to himself and to that society not to appear in undress. When an acquaintance of the writer of this article was married in church, one February afternoon in 1863, JOHN M. DANIEL was there in a long-tail coat and white waist-coat. He believed in white waist-coats. He told his manager, WALKER, that he ought never to go to a party without wearing a white vest.

"But, Mr. DANIEL," objected WALKER, "suppose a man hasn't got a white vest and is too poor, these war times, to buy one?"

"D—n it! sir, let him stay at home."

Besides the mirror, the *cheval* glass and a few chairs, there was no other furniture in his chamber, except an old fashioned high-post bedstead, which, together with most of his furniture, he had bought at the sales of the effects of refugees once wealthy. He believed in blood, in families of ancient and honorable descent, in gentlemen, and preferred the workmanship and antiquated style of things which had descended as heir-looms in the houses of gentlemen to the costliest and most tasteful productions of modern cabinet-makers. There was no carpet on the floor of his chamber, and he slept without a fire. In the morning, a fire was built in the room next to his chamber, and there his breakfast was generally served between 11 and 12 o'clock. He seldom went to bed before 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. This back room in the second story had a bed in

it and was used as a guest chamber, but I do not remember to have known or heard of but one occupant—R. W. HUGHES. He made DANIEL'S house his home whenever he came to town.

Adjoining the dressing-room in the passage of the second floor, was the bath room. Leaning against the door of this bath-room I used to see a bag of Java coffee, which made my mouth water every time I looked at it, for coffee, in those days, was twenty to thirty dollars a pound.

The first room in the third story was used as a sort of lumber room. A barrel or two of white sugar, a few boxes of manufactured tobacco, and some large empty boxes, which had contained books, were there the last time I looked in. The little room cut off from the passage, was the library. The number of books was not what one would have expected. A complete set of VOLTAIRE'S works; the DELPHIN edition of the classics, complete; SWIFT'S Works, CLARENDON'S Rebellion, and a few miscellaneous books are all that I can now recall. Most if not all of these editions were old and rare; and strange to tell, most of them were bought at private sale or at auction during the war. DANIEL was an omniverous reader, but had a sovereign contempt for the so-called "literature of the day." The first NAPOLEON, riding post in his carriage to the theatre of war, amused himself by dipping into books just published and pitching one after another out of the window. This was much the way with JOHN M. DANIEL, before he went abroad, when, in his capacity as editor of the *Examiner*, all the new publications were sent to him. He never cared to keep them, either gave or threw them away, and if he had occasion to make an extract from one of them, used his scissors remorselessly.

The back room in the third story, was a favorite one with him. Like all the other rooms, it was tastefully and cheerfully papered. It commanded a view of James river, the hills of Henrico and the wide lowlands and woods of Chesterfield. Having a southern exposure, there was always plenty of light in the afternoon, and the room was easily made warm and comfortable. Here he loved to sit in a leather-bottomed chair, with a little table near him, reading VOLTAIRE, the Latin poets, or contributions and communications to the *Examiner*. In this

room, he kept his collection of medals and seals; a violin lay in its wooden case on the floor, stringless and unused. A moody man, he sometimes deserted this pleasant room and confined himself for weeks to the rooms on the lower floors.

He lived well, but not luxuriously. He detested hotels and boarding-houses. When he lived in rooms over his office, he had his meals sent to him by TOM GRIFFIN, or ZETELLE. After he went to house-keeping, his negro cook was his caterer. The day I dined at his house with WIGFALL and HUGHES, he had but one course, a single joint of meat, a few vegetables, no dessert, coffee and wine—Madeira from Gov. FLOYD's cellar, which HUGHES had brought with him. That evening, he called for "another bottle," after the rest were satisfied; but I never saw him intoxicated, and on one occasion only under the influence of wine even in a slight degree. Then his eyes were a little glassy, his manner dogmatic, and he rocked a little as he stood up in front of me and laid down the law in regard to things political. Whiskey he hated with his whole heart. I have heard him curse it and its effects most bitterly, and once wrote, at his special request, an article beginning, "Whiskey, not the Yankee, is to be the master of the Confederacy." The feebleness of his digestion compelled him to be temperate both in eating and drinking. I have heard him say that a single glass of whiskey and water taken at night by prescription of his physician, would give him headache the next day.

Coffee was his favorite stimulant, but I do not think he used it to excess. He was so fond of it that he would not rest until he had taught his pet terriers to drink it. These dogs—"Frank" and "Fanny" were their names, I believe—he loved, but in his own fashion. He delighted in teasing and worrying them; would pinch and pull their ears until they yelped with pain, and was never more pleased than when he succeeded in getting up a mild fight between them. This was not easy to do, because "Fanny" was "Frank's" mother; and, when he was set upon her, went to work with rather a bad grace, while she bore his attacks with exemplary patience. When DANIEL got tired of playing with his pets, who were devoted to him, he would drive them away with his horsewhip. Yet he never laid on with

the full weight of his hand. He was cruel to them, at times, but never brutal.

I asked him one day if his solitary mode of life did not make him suffer from *ennui*. "Yes," said he, wearily, but "I am used to it."

"Don't you find solitary feeding injurious to your health? I tried it once at college, and, within a week, I was made positively sick by it."

"You are right," he replied. "It literally destroys the appetite. In Turin, I employed an Italian count as my *chef de cuisine*. He was really an artist in his profession and exerted all his powers to please me. He had *carte blanche* as to expense, and sent me up every day, the most tempting dishes. I could taste them—that was all. I never enjoyed a meal at home. Whereas, when invited to dine in the country with a pleasant party of ladies and gentlemen—would you believe it? I would sometimes be helped three times to meat."

I asked him, then, as I had often done before, why he did not marry. He was always pleased when the subject was broached, and I am sure we must have had, first and last, a dozen conversations on this topic alone. After discussing the *pros* and *cons*, he generally wound up by declaring that, if he ever married, it must be with the explicit understanding that himself and his wife should occupy separate houses. To this end, he often threatened to buy the house next to his own and have a door cut in the partition wall, the key of which he would keep in his own pocket. "The noise of children and the gabble of a woman with her lady friends, was something which he could not and would not stand."

He was a warm admirer of the female sex, but his opinion of them was not the most exalted. Social life on the Continent did not tend to weaken his natural prejudice against mankind, and probably lessened his esteem for the fairer portion of humanity. Over the mantle-shelf in his chamber, hung an exquisite miniature on ivory. The face was beyond question, the most beautiful I have ever seen and the execution was worthy of the subject. This picture was presented to him by the lady who painted it, and it was her own likeness. According to

his account, she was titled, rich, marvellously accomplished in music, painting, and poetry, eccentric, reckless, alike of herself and of others. Her name he would never tell me. He confessed to other fancies while in Europe, but did not acknowledge, and I believe, did not have, a serious affair during the whole seven years of his residence abroad. It is said that his heart was never touched but once, and then by a beautiful Virginian. This was before he left America. He told me frequently, that it was impossible for him to love a girl who was not pretty, and yet he would shudder at the thought of uniting himself to "a pretty fool." It was to no purpose that I insisted that true beauty was of the soul alone. He hooted at this doctrine as "a stale lie." Beauty of face, he might possibly dispense with, but beauty of form—beauty of some sort—a graceful figure and high-bred manner were absolutely essential. Happening, one evening, to express in his hearing my regret that I was not acquainted with some young lady in Richmond, who played well on the piano, he started almost as if I had stabbed him and gave vent to an exclamation of the most intense disgust—as if the bare idea of a piano-playing young lady nauseated him. His theory about the management of women was simple and original. "There are," he would say, "but two ways to manage a woman—to club her or to freeze her."

His *menage* in 1863-4 consisted of three servants, all males—a cook, an ostler and a valet, who also acted as his dining-room servant. His manner towards the boy who waited in the house was rough even to harshness. He liked his ostler, and spoke kindly to him, whenever I happened to see them together. I do not wonder that his house-servants ran away from him. He lost two within as many years. One was caught, punished and immediately sold. The other, for whom he offered a reward of \$2,000, made good his escape. After that, he bought a very likely woman, nearly white, who remained with him until his death.

Such was JOHN M. DANIEL at home. What he was at his office, I will now proceed to tell. Whilst I was contributing to his paper, my habit was to hand my article to the manager in

the morning, and at night I would go around to read the proof. DANIEL himself always read the proofs, though not with as much pains as I liked. He reached the office generally between 8 and 9 o'clock, and I was almost always there before him. In those days, garroters were abundant, and the first thing he did, after entering the room, was to lay a DERRINGER pistol, which he carried in his hand ready for any emergency, on the large table which sat in the middle of the floor. This done, he would offer me a cigar—he could never be persuaded to smoke a pipe, and his cigars were of the weakest—and then begin the work of examining proofs. First, the proofs of the news columns, then of Legislative or Congressional proceedings, next the local news, and lastly the editorials. All these, he examined with care, altering, erasing, abridging and adding as he thought fit. Even the advertisements were submitted to him, and I have known him to become furious over an advertisement which he thought ought not to have been admitted.

He was the only newspaper proprietor I ever heard of who would throw out, without hesitation, paying advertisements, sometimes of much importance to advertisers, in order to make room for editorials, or for contributions which particularly pleased him. Oftentimes his news-column was reduced to the last point of compression to make room for editorial matter. The make-up of his paper engaged his serious attention, and I have known him to devote nearly half an hour to the discussion of the question where such and such an article should go, and whether it should be printed in "bourgeois," "brevier," or "lead-ed minion." He loved to have two or three really good editorials in each issue of his paper. Short, pointed articles, he had little faith in, believing that the length of a column, or a column and a half, was essential to the effect of an article. The *London Times* was his model, and he promised himself, in case the Confederate cause succeeded, to make the *Examiner* fully equal to its English model. A pungent paragraph was relished by him as much as by any human being—indeed, he was quick to detect excellence in anything, long or short—but the sub-editorial, or "lead-ed minion," column was left apart for just such paragraphs, and the dignity of the editorial column was but once,

within my recollection, trenched upon. Even then, the article was a short editorial rather than a paragraph. It was near the close of the war, when, despairing of the cause, he urged, in a few strong sentences, the duty of Virginia to hold herself in readiness to resume her sovereignty and to act for herself alone in the great emergency, which he felt was approaching. I am inclined to think that this was the last article he ever penned.

Laying so much stress upon editorials, it was but natural that he should pay particular attention to correcting them. This, in fact, was his main business in coming to his office at night. At times he preferred to do his own writing, but in general, and certainly in the last year or two of his life, he much preferred to have his ideas put into words by others. Then he would alter and amend to suit his fastidious taste. Any fault of grammar or construction, any inelegance, he detected immediately. He improved by erasure as much, or more, than by addition; but when a thought in the contributed article was at all suggestive, he seldom failed to add two or three, and sometimes ten, or even twenty, lines to it. This was a labor of love to him, and did not fatigue him as it does most people. On the other hand, he disliked extremely to read manuscript. This sometimes brought trouble upon him. Coming in one night, he found on the table the proof of an article on finance, which I had written. He read it over carefully, and, to my surprise, did not put his pencil through a single line of it. Whilst I was pluming myself on this unusual circumstance, he looked up at me and laughed.

“Very well written,” said he, “but diametrically opposed to the views of the *Examiner*.”

Too old a hand at the bellows to be disgruntled by this, I replied quietly:

“Pitch it in the fire.”

“What! and fill two columns myself between this and midnight? This is every line of editorial on hand.”

“I am really very sorry. But what is to be done? It is impossible for me to write any more. I never can write after dinner; besides I am broken down.”

“Let me see. Let me see.”

He took up the unlucky editorial, read it over more carefully than before, and then said, in a tone of great satisfaction:

“I can fix it!”

And so he did. Sitting down at the table, he went to work, and within twenty minutes, transformed it completely. It appeared the next morning. There were certain awkwardnesses, which we two who were in the secret could detect, but to the bulk of the readers of the paper were doubtless quite imperceptible.

When he had to write an article himself, his first question, after the usual salutation was, not “What is the news?” but, “What are people falking about?” and he upbraided me continually for not doing what he himself never did, “circulating among the people.” He aimed always to make his paper interesting by the discussion of subjects which were uppermost in the popular mind; nor did it concern him much what the subject might be. His only concern was that it should be treated in the *Examiner* with dignity and ability, if it admitted of such treatment; if not, to dispose of it humorously or wittily. But the humor or wit must be done cleverly and with due attention to style. He began to write about ten o'clock, wrote rapidly, in a crumpled, ugly hand, and completed his work, revision of proofs and everything, by midnight, or a little thereafter. He then returned to his house, and either sat up or laid awake in bed, reading until two or three o'clock in the morning.

His assistants in 1863-4, besides reporters, were the local editor, J. MARSHALL HANNA; the news editor, H. RIVES POLLARD, and the editor of the “leaded minion,” or war column, P. H. GIBSON. He had a high opinion of them all. POLLARD, he declared was “the best news-editor in the whole South.” HANNA he pronounced “a genius in his way,” and took great credit to himself for having discovered, developed and fostered him. GIBSON'S ability he acknowledged and complimented frequently in my hearing.

The business of the office gave him very little trouble. He had, of course, an eye to everything; but the printing floor, the press-room, the sale and distribution of papers, mailing, the payment of employés, the settlement of bills—in a word, the finances, out-door transactions, and banking business were all

attended to by R. F. WALKER, the manager. He had but a single book-keeper—a gentleman of the name of CAREY, who was also his cashier. WALKER was his faithful assistant in everything, from the purchasing of type and glue for rollers to correspondence with men of business and oftentimes, with politicians and contributors. At the end of every week, WALKER brought to the house on Broad street, the bank book, posted up to date. I was permitted several times to look at this book. The nett receipts per week in 1863-4 were from \$1,000 \$1,200, or \$1,500. After deducting personal expenses of every kind, (and DANIEL never stinted himself in anything,) it may be safely assumed that, in the third year of the war, the paper cleared at least \$50,000—perhaps double that amount. The owner was often on the lookout for investments, and made a number of purchases of real estate. He may have speculated, but, if he did, the speculations must have been on a small scale. During my visits to his house I never saw there any one of the men who were known in Richmond to be largely engaged in speculation. Moreover, his paper, in common with others, contained denunciation after denunciation of speculators of all sorts, and was particularly severe upon brokers, gamblers and whiskey sellers. Towards the close of the war, when investments of all sorts were doubtful, I suggested to him that he had better buy gold. His reply was, “I have more gold now than I know what to do with.” I am persuaded, however, that this gold was part of the \$30,000 in coin, or its equivalent, which he brought over with him from Sardinia.

I have said that he never stinted himself, and this is true. His table, indeed, was never loaded with luxuries and delicacies—which might have been bought at almost any period of the war, if one chose to pay the enormous prices asked for them—for the reason that his digestion would not tolerate anything but the simplest food; but his self-indulgence was notably shown in articles of dress, in coal and in gas. He brought with him from Europe clothes enough to have lasted him for years, but he never scrupled to buy a \$1,000 suit whenever he fancied he needed it. When coal was very high, and one fire would have sufficed him, he kept two or three burning. Gas

was costly in the extreme; two burners of his chandelier would have afforded him ample light—for he had excellent eyes—but he was not content until he had all six of the burners at their full height. In reply to my remonstrance against this extravagance, he would say curtly:

“I like plenty of light.”

If at his house, DANIEL was affable and almost genial; in his office he was too frequently on the other extreme. He loved to show his authority, and, as the saying is, “to make things stand around.” His scowl at being interrupted while in the act of composing, or when otherwise busily engaged, will never be forgotten by any one who ever encountered it. Holding drunken men in special detestation, he was, as by a fatality, subjected continually to their visits, both at his office and at his house. More than once, I have been sufficiently diverted by intoxicated officers just from the army, who called in to pay in person, their maudlin tribute of admiration to the editor of the *Examiner*. Sometimes he bore these visitations with a patience that surprised me; but he never failed to remunerate himself by awful imprecations upon the intruder as soon as he was out of hearing. While his tone to his employés was, as a general rule, cold and often intolerably dictatorial, I have seen him very frequently as affable and familiar as heart could wish; indeed, I have known him to go so far as to come out of his *sanctum* into the small room occupied by his sub-editors with the proof of a contribution in his hand, in order that they might enjoy it with him. Occurrences of this sort, however, were rare.

Belonging essentially to the *genus irritabile*, his anger was easily provoked. He could not bear to be crossed in anything. Whoever said aught in print against “the *Examiner* newspaper,” was sure to bring down upon himself a torrent of abuse. Possessing in an eminent degree, and indeed, priding himself upon his sense of the becoming and the decorous, he was no sooner engaged in a newspaper controversy than he forgot, or at least, threw behind him, the sense even of decency, and heaped upon his adversary epithets which ought never to have defiled the columns of a respectable journal. This was kept up, sometimes, long after the original heat of the controversy had aba-

ted—his purpose being, as I suppose, to give the opposing paper, and others, a lesson which would never be forgotten, and thus to ensure himself against similar annoyances in the future. To avoid trouble and to maintain the *Times*-like character of the *Examiner*, his rule was never to notice the opinion of other papers, and not even to quote from them. He waited to be attacked; but when attacked, he followed the advice of POLO-SIXTS to the very letter. But his hottest anger and his bitterest maledictions were reserved for his political enemies. His rage against the administration of Mr. DAVIS, and particularly certain members of his Cabinet, was, at times, terrible. In like manner, the journalistic partisans of the administration came in for a full share of his fury. I shall never forget his excitement, one night, on hearing that a certain article in the *Enquirer* had been written by a person formerly in his employ. I can see him now, striding up and down the room, exclaiming, "I'll put a ball through him!" "I'll put a ball through him!" This sentence he repeated fully twenty times, and in a tone which gave assurance of a purpose quite as deadly as his words imported. Yet nothing came of it. He was a hearty and a persistent hater, but he was not implacable. During his stormy life, he had many fallings out, and many makings up. It is not unsafe to assert that he never had a friend with whom, at some time, he did not have a misunderstanding: yet it is certain that he died in perfect peace, and on good terms with all, or nearly all, of his old friends. One of the last and most pleasing acts of his life was the glad acceptance with which he met the advance of his friend, Mr. THOMAS H. WYNNE, from whom he had been estranged during nearly the whole war.

His enmity to Mr. DAVIS amounting to something like a frenzy, will be ascribed, by those who differed from him in opinion, to a bad heart, pique at not being made the confidential friend of the President, or at not having been sent abroad in a diplomatic capacity. But by those, on the other hand, who agreed with him in thinking that the Cause suffered more from mal-administration than from anything or all things else, his course will not be so harshly judged; and their chief regret will be that arguments so forcible as DANIEL'S were not left to produce their

effect unaided, or rather unimpeded by diatribe and invective. To reconcile these conflicting opinions is impossible, and if it were not, is beyond the intent and aim of this sketch. I remember asking him once whether Mr. DAVIS ever saw his animadversions upon him.

"They tell me down stairs," he replied, "that the first person here in the morning is JEFF. DAVIS'S body servant. He comes before day-light, and says that his master can't get out of bed or eat his breakfast until his appetite is stimulated by reading every word in the *Examiner*."

"Do you think he profits by its perusal?"

"Unquestionably. The few sound ideas he ever had came from the *Examiner*."

This he said with perfect sincerity, for he contended, both in the paper and out of it, that every wise and useful measure which had been promulgated by the administration or by Congress, was borrowed or stolen from the *Examiner*.

He was proud of his paper. If he sometimes regarded it as "a mill-stone about his neck," he nevertheless devoted his life to it, and found in it his chief happiness. He looked to it as a source of power and wealth in the future. Of that future, he was more sanguine than any man I ever knew. How well I remember the night he said to me, without provocation, if I recollect aright:

"I shall live to eat the goose that eats the grass over your grave."

Perhaps there was something in my appearance which called forth the remark, for I must have been worn by the enormous amount of work I was then doing.

I looked up from the table, where I sat writing, and said quietly:

"I don't doubt it; but what makes you say so?"

"Two reasons; I come of a long-lived race, and I have an infallible sign of longevity."

"What is that?"

"I never dream—my sleep is always sound and refreshing."

Little did I then think that before two years were ended, I should see him in his coffin. He was mistaken, however, in

saying that he came of a long-lived race. His father was not old when he died, and his mother was comparatively young when she came to her death—of consumption, if I mistake not. He was thinking, probably, of his uncle, Judge DANIEL, more than of his parents. His own health was never robust; his constitution was delicate, as a glance at his figure showed. His chest was narrow and rather shallow, though not sunken, and his hips were broad. The organs of digestion and respiration were alike feeble. He had had an attack of pneumonia before going to Europe, and during his whole life he was a victim of dyspepsia, from which he had suffered greatly in youth and early manhood. I often warned him against the injudicious and frequent use of blue mass, his favorite medicine. Great virile strength he had, as was shown by his dense beard and the coarse hair on his feminine hands, but in muscle, sinew and bone he was deficient. He took great care of himself. I was told that when he returned to Richmond his person was protected by a triple suit of underclothing. Next his skin he wore flannel; over that, buckskin, and over that again, silk. This load of clothing he contended was indispensable to health in Turin, where the atmospheric changes were very violent and sudden. In Richmond he dispensed with some of this undergear, but probably gave up only the buckskin. Among other items which he gave a Maryland blockade runner, who waited on him one day while I was present, was an order for "one dozen silk shirts of the largest size." The size he particularly insisted on, and the inference was that he intended to wear them over flannel. What availed all these precautions when the final summons came?

Long as this article is, I cannot close it without some allusion to JOHN M. DANIEL as an editor and as a man. He was born an editor. Whatever may have been his abilities as a diplomatist and a politician, whatever distinction he might have attained in the forum or in the field, his forte lay decidedly in the department of letters and more especially in the conduct of a newspaper. He was not a poet, not a historian, a novelist, an essayist or even, if I may coin the word, a magazinist. He had talent enough to have excelled in any or all of these, but his taste

led him in another direction. It was hoped by everybody that he would on his return home write a volume about his residence in Europe. Such a book would have been exceedingly interesting and valuable. But he was not a book-maker. Moreover, it is not improbable that he expected to return to diplomatic life, and did not wish to embarrass himself by reflections upon the manners and customs of the people among whom he expected to reside. He could not have written about the Italians or any other people without dipping his pen in vitrol. The publication of a part of one of his letters to his friend, Dr. PETICOLAS, had brought him into trouble with the Italians and made him furious with his associate, HUGHES, who took charge of the *Examiner* in his absence. This occurred early in his career as a *diplomat*, and made him cautious. He preserved his dispatches with utmost care, in large handsomely bound volumes; but whether with a view to publication or for his own use in after years, I am unable to say.

I remember his telling me, one night, that he intended to make a book.

"I wish you would," said I.

"Mark you, I did not say *write* a book, but *make* a book."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to make a book with the scissors," he replied.

"How so?"

"Why, by taking the files of the *Examiner* from its foundation to the present time, and clipping the best things from them. I am sure that I could in this way make a book, consisting of a number of volumes, which would contain more sense, more wit and more humor than anything which has been published in this country for the last twenty years. Similar publications have been made in England in modern times, and long since the days of the *Spectator* and the *Rambler*, and they have succeeded. I believe that the best things which have appeared in the *Examiner*, if put into book form, would compare favorably with any English publication of the kind, and that the book would command a ready sale."

So far as my personal knowledge goes, this is the only book which JOHN M. DANIEL ever thought seriously of making. I

agreed with him then, and I can but think now, that the present owners of the *Examiner* would do well to carry out his views. In the impoverished condition of the South, at this precise time, it is idle to expect a very large sale of any publication whatsoever; but the day will come, I trust, when the bound volume of selections from the *Examiner* will have a place in every Southern gentleman's library.

JOHN M. DANIEL was emphatically an editor—not a newspaper contributor, but an editor and a politician. He was enough of the latter to have made a name in the Cabinet. He was no orator, although he had an orator's mouth. I never heard of his making a public speech. He must have had a great natural repugnance to speaking. Could he have overcome this repugnance, he had command enough of language to have ensured him considerable distinction in forensic display; but his temper was far too hot and quick to admit of success in debate. He knew men, in the light in which a politician views them, thoroughly well. His natural faculty of weighing measures and of foreseeing their effects, was much above the common. He had in him the elements of a statesman. His historical studies and his knowledge of mankind were not in vain. Before the first blow was struck and when both Mr. BENJAMIN and Mr. SEWARD, speaking the sentiments of their respective peoples, were issuing their "ninety days notes," he prophesied not only the magnitude, but the inhuman and unchristian ferocity of the late war. And who, in this sad hour, can forget how, as the struggle drew near its close, he strove day after day and week after week, to revive the flagging spirits and to kindle anew the energy and courage of the Southern people by terrible pictures of the fate which has ever attended "oppressed nationalities?" It is true that these articles were written by JOHN MITCHELL; but they were inspired by DANIEL. Alas! those prophecies, like all others, have been interpreted fully only in their completion.

As a politician, eminence was not his. Had he lived, it is as certain as anything human can be, that he would have filled an honored niche in the temple of political fame; but his celebrity was destined to be confined to the domain of journalism. Therein he obtained a distinction which has been surpassed by none

and equalled but by few American journalists. His place is by the side of THOMAS RICHIE, HAMPDEN PLEASANTS and JOSEPH GALES. As an editor, he was to politicians what the Earl of WARWICK was to kings.

“It is said,” he remarked to me, one day, “that my admiration for FLOYD is due to the fact that FLOYD made me. The truth is, I made FLOYD.”

He was accustomed to magnify his office of editor, and his exalted opinion of Gen. FLOYD was based not upon gratitude but upon his estimate of the man himself. It has been said that the quality which women most admire in men is “strength.” The assertion holds equally good of man’s admiration for man, and is particularly true in regard to JOHN M. DANIEL. He worshipped strength and nothing but strength of mind and of body. He despised fools and weaklings of all sorts. Goodness—the moral qualities—he threw entirely out of the account. He did not much believe in the existence of these qualities, and when they did exist, he regarded them as but evidences of weakness. FLOYD was his “man of bronze”—therefore he liked him. Of another and more distinguished politician, he would speak in terms of extreme contempt. “He snivels—he weeps,” he would say, in tones of indescribable disgust. Often have I heard him expatiate upon WIGFALL’S magnificent *physique* and his unmistakable natural courage. “It is the genuine thing,” he would say. “There is no put on there. He has got native pluck—the actual article; it is no strain on him to exhibit it. The grit is in him, and you can’t shake him.”

Of DANIEL’S OWN courage, I think I can speak safely and correctly; and I may as well do so here, although I had intended to defer mention of it until I came to the discussion of his character as a man.

He did not have the hard animal bravery of WIGFALL; it was not in his constitution. His highly wrought nervous system was not sufficiently panoplied with brawn to ensure it against the agitation arising from a sudden shock or the violence of an unexpected attack with the fist or club. Nor was he of that tough and wiry make, which enables some fragile men to meet the rudest physical assaults without an outward tremor. But

he had courage of another sort and had it in a high degree. What is generally called moral courage, but is more properly intellectual courage—that is bravery which is founded not upon combativeness, the consciousness of muscular strength or upon great excitability unrestrained by caution, but upon the clear perception of the nature and extent of danger together with the hardihood of great self-esteem and pride of character—he possessed to an extent which is rarely seen. To make a reputation, he commenced his editorial career by attacking personally nearly every man of note in Virginia, thereby incurring a responsibility in the field and out of it—for it rested with the parties assailed to demand satisfaction according to the code or to take it at the pistol's mouth in the street, as seemed best in their eyes—which few men of the strongest nerve would have dared to assume.

He lived in a land where duels were common; in a city where the editor of the *Whig* had been slain but a few years before, and among a people who never entertained the first thought of accepting damages at law as reparation for a personal affront; hence the course of the *Examiner* during its earlier years was attended with a degree of danger which none but a truly daring or a fool-hardy man would ever have encountered. But DANIEL was no fool; and although he lacked caution and allowed the bitterness of his feelings to carry him too far, he was anything but reckless. Appreciating fully his danger, he willingly risked his life and his reputation in order to secure the advantages which lay beyond the point he so coolly braved. To carry his point, he accepted cheerfully the odium of the community, and, indeed, of the whole State in which he lived. For the sake of power and a competency, he became an outcast from society. At one time he was literally hated or feared by everybody. In the whole world there was scarcely a human being who really liked him for himself. All this he brought upon himself, deliberately and for a purpose. He marked out an arduous course, and he followed that course resolutely to the last day of his life, accepting all the consequences. Surely, neither a weak nor a timid man could have done this. Assaulted suddenly in the streets, by a powerful man, of known courage, who threa-

tened then and there to cut his ears off, it is not to be wondered that the fragile man showed some agitation; but his intrepid "you shall have your duel" in the admirable correspondence with ELMORE, and his calm bearing on the field in the very presence of death, (for his adversary was no trifler,) proved beyond question that JOHN M. DANIEL had that within him which men in every age have recognised as genuine courage.

To return from this digression: He was an editor in the best and fullest meaning of the word. He could not only write himself, and write well, but he could make others write well. The crudest articles, as I have shown, if they had but the germ of something good in them, could be transformed by him in a few moments, with an ease and an art peculiarly his own, into powerful leaders. A touch or two of his pen gave a new coloring to a contribution and made it his own. He had the power of infusing his spirit into every part of his paper, and of giving it, thereby, an individuality which made it as attractive as it was *unique*. He had innumerable editorial contributors, but they all caught, insensibly and quietly, his spirit, his very tone; and there was about the *Examiner*, whenever he was at the head of it, a homogeneity which under other managers it never attained. It was easy to tell when he left the paper, and when he came back to it. His precise articles could not always be told, but there was a nameless something about the paper as a whole, which gave indubitable evidence of his presence. The very arrangement of the printed matter and the allocation of articles betrayed him behind the scenes. He brought with him, as often as he resumed the helm, a magnetic charm which drew to the paper the cleverest things which were written by anybody. Whoever chanced to do a good thing with the pen was anxious for it to appear in the *Examiner*. There it would be read by more people and be better appreciated than in any other paper. The credit would be DANIEL'S, but what of that? The intellectual bantling would be sure not to die still born. It would make a noise and be talked about; its unknown parent would hear its praises, and be secretly proud.

Many men have written for the *Examiner*, and some have conducted it with ability; but it has never been, and it may be

fairly reckoned that it never will be, edited as it was by JOHN M. DANIEL. He had not the humor, and he may not have had the wit of some of the contributors; nor did he have the financial knowledge, or the scientific attainments of others who wrote for him; but he made a better editor than any or all of those combined could have made. The truth of this assertion will be understood fully when I call the names of some of his contributors. They are as follows: ROBERT W. HUGHES, PATRICK HENRY AYLETT, WILLIAM OLD, DR. A. E. PETICOLAS, EDWARD A. POLLARD, L. Q. WASHINGTON, Prof. BASIL GILDERSLEEVE, JOHN R. THOMPSON, and JOHN MITCHELL. Some of these gentlemen have had the paper entirely in their charge for months at a time, but it is no disparagement to them to say that the paper in their hands was never what it was in the hands of JOHN M. DANIEL. He had in him an intensity of bitterness which they did not possess, and would not have displayed if they had possessed. He had a strength of individuality, an art of attracting contributions, and of shaping them into his own similitude, and, what is most to the point, a pains-taking attention to the minutiae of the paper, which, combined, made him an editor whose equal, in all respects, has never been seen in this country.

He had little, and if his own opinion were taken, not a particle of humor. He was too bitter for that. But he had the quickest and keenest appreciation of the humorous. DICKENS was a favorite with him. Nay, he had, he must have had humor of his own. Wit he had in a high degree, and of every sort; but he was particularly happy in nicknaming and in personalities of all kinds. Some of those names showed both wit and humor; as when he called the cadets of the Virginia Military Institute, on the occasion of their first visit to Richmond, "kildees"—a title, which as it seemed to belittle them, made the cadets very angry, but which was nevertheless so appropriate and so harmless that everybody laughed good naturedly at it. The appellation of "leaden gimlet," which he applied to a certain lawyer in Richmond, is an example of galling satire, without the least admixture of the milk of human kindness. The office of Mr. BENJAMIN, the Secretary of State, contained files of the leading newspapers of the Confederacy; and hence it was

called by DANIEL "the Confederate Reading Room"—a name intended to convey his contempt at once for the office and the official who occupied it.

He had a lively fancy, but little or no imagination in the higher sense of the term; certainly he had not the creative faculty. I do not know that he ever attempted rhyme, much less poetry or dramatic characterization. His mind was logical, but dry and elaborate argumentation was not to his liking. He caught readily the salient points of a question, and aimed, in writing, to present them forcibly, but not with too much brevity. I saw him return to the author a number of editorials, which I thought excellent, and asked him why he did so. "They are well written," said he; "in fact, they are elegantly written, but there is no *incision* in them."

His reading was various and extensive, his memory first-rate. He told me that, during his residence abroad, he not only made himself familiar with Italian and French literature, but read in addition every Latin author of celebrity, and many whose names were almost wholly unknown. Greek he neglected, and he paid little attention to German. History, Biography, Memoirs, Political Treatises, Novels, Poetry and Essays of the better class, he literally devoured, and retained with wonderful fidelity everything of importance that he had ever read. He cared little, I think, for metaphysics, or for the exact sciences, and discovered less information in regard to anatomy and physiology than many men of ordinary capacity and education. He was not, strictly speaking, a learned man. His taste was pure and correct; his love of "English undefiled" very great. Yet, he was not a slavish purist. His peculiar spelling was but a mark of his infinite detestation of WEBSTER, as a New England Yankee. His favorite authors were VOLTAIRE and SWIFT. The latter was his model. He often urged me to study SWIFT diligently, in preference to ADDISON, DRYDEN, MILTON, or any other English author, ancient or modern.

It remains for me to speak of him in his personal character, and this I shall do as briefly as I can. He who has ever looked unflinchingly into his own heart will be slow to bring against another the accusation which so many were fond of bringing

against JOHN M. DANIEL—that he was “a bad man.” That he was essentially and thoroughly “bad,” no one who knew him intimately will charge. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.* Upon that principle alone I should exonerate him from the charge. But, more than that, I saw and heard too much to allow me, for an instant, to yield assent to every sweeping indictment against the character of the dead Virginian. Whilst he was yet extremely poor, he went twenty miles to lend a still poorer friend some money; and, at the same time, to save himself an expense which he could ill afford, walked the whole distance between Richmond and Petersburg and back again. This does not argue a bad heart. He bore his poverty manfully, denied himself and “owed no man anything.” Such is not the wont of bad men. I know it gave him sincere pleasure to compose a quarrel, and, when called upon, he exerted himself energetically to accomplish that end. But bad men prefer to stir up strife, rather than to allay it. I know that he made a trip to Charlottesville for the purpose of buying a house advertised for sale at auction, which house he intended to rent cheaply to me, in order that I might escape the grinding exactions of city landlords. And this he did at my request. Is it the habit of bad men to undertake such journeys in the interest of those who have no special claim on them? I know that at a time when nearly every property owner in Richmond seemed almost conscienceless in their extortions, the houses purchased by JOHN M. DANIEL, and fitted up by him at no trifling expense, were rented to his assistant editors on terms most reasonable. Is this the practice of bad men? That DANIEL was not liberal and open hearted I will admit. But he was not a screw. He was just; upright in his dealings, prompt to the minute in all his payments. His printers, his writers, all in his employ, were better paid than those in any other newspaper office in the city. If this be the habit of bad men, what pity it is that the world is not full of them!

That he treated his relatives with unkindness, and that the hardships he endured in the days of his poverty were no sufficient excuse for this unkindness, no one, who has heard both sides of the question, will deny. But the man was morbid both

in body and in mind. One of the evidences of insanity laid down in the books is a causeless hatred of the nearest and best relatives and friends. I do not say or believe that JOHN M. DANIEL was insane. Nevertheless his bitterness towards people in general, and towards certain kindred in particular, betokened anything but mental soundness. His body perhaps was never entirely free from disease. The tubercular disposition, with a tendency to development in that part of the system, (the digestive organs), the disorders of which are known to affect the mind more powerfully than any others, may account for many of those unfortunate peculiarities which contradistinguished him from healthier and happier men. Had he possessed a florid complexion and a robust organism, who believes that his faults would have been the same? Temperament is not an adequate excuse for every failing, but due allowance should ever be made for its influence.

Added to his bodily infirmities, there was a want of faith in human nature and its Great Author. Yet, he was by no means an atheist, but rather a deist. I questioned him very gravely one day concerning his belief in God. He paused for some time, and then answered very cautiously and vaguely. The impression left on my mind was, that he believed in a Great First Cause, but wished for more light. Touching the revelation of the New Testament, he gave no opinion. He seemed, however, to think that really nothing was known in regard to the "bourne whence no traveller returns."* When this sub-

*The following incident, recently communicated to me, may be relied on as strictly true, and serves still further to illustrate DANIEL'S character.

Dr. RAWLINGS said to WALKER some weeks before DANIEL'S death: "WALKER, DANIEL must die. You seem to be able to talk to him at all times without offending him; and, if you think proper, the next time you find him in a calm frame of mind, you may ask him if he would like to converse with a minister of the Gospel." Knowing DANIEL'S dislike to most preachers, WALKER thought over the matter several days before he could muster courage to bring up the subject. One morning, when he seemed stronger and perfectly free from pain, WALKER sat some moments, very nervous, and almost afraid to allude to the matter; but at length he said: "Mr. DANIEL, you have always thought a great deal of Dr. HOGE; you believe he is a sincere, good man." He replied, very promptly, "Well, what of it?" WALKER answered, "You are very ill, and I thought perhaps you would like to have him call on you and talk with you." He looked up, smilingly, and said, "WALKER, *I am no woman!* I don't want any one but yourself to come in this room, except the doctor." He never alluded to his being dangerously ill save once, when he said to WALKER, "send word to your wife that you will sleep in my house to-night. Something may happen before morning, and I want you with me."

ject was broached, neither of us dreamed that he was so soon to explore that unknown world, which lay dark and unfathomable before him. But a few evenings before, he had congratulated himself upon the position he had gained in the world.

"I am still young," said he; "not very young either, for I will soon be forty; but I know no young man who has better prospects than myself, and few who have done so well. I suppose I am worth now nearly \$100,000 in good money. The *Examiner* is very valuable property, and destined to be much more so. I expect to live long, and, if I do, I shall be rich. When I am rich, I shall buy the old family estate in Stafford county, and shall add to it all the land for miles around. I shall build a house to my fancy, and, with my possessions walled in, I shall teach these people what they never knew—how to live like a gentleman."

Such, in effect, and almost in words, was the picture he drew of his future. It was the first and only time I ever knew him to indulge his fancy in building air-castles.

I may add as one additional proof that he was not an atheist, the fact that he made it a rule to publish in the *Examiner*, on each succeeding New Year's day, a poem in honor of the Deity. He did this not merely because he thought it a becoming and good old custom, but because it was a real gratification to him to do so. He bestowed much thought on the selection of this New Year's poem, singled it out months before hand, and sometimes consulted his friends to ascertain whether there was not some poem of the kind with which he was not acquainted. He certainly asked me to aid him in making such a selection, and I have no reason to believe that he did not consult others also.

He hated men, but not mankind. To the latter he was indifferent. But he despised men more than he hated them. It had been his misfortune to view men from two inauspicious standpoints— from poverty on the one hand and from power on the other—and in each case the picture was distorted by the medium of a morbid physical and mental nature. Proud, with the pride of an acute and bold intellect, he fancied, in his days of penury, that he was contemned and neglected, when he knew he had that within him which was to be neither neglected nor con-

temned. After he had proved this, after he had become famous, prosperous and powerful, he despised men, because he fancied they envied him his prosperity, feared his power and hated himself. "Man pleased him not; no, nor woman either," because his sad experience had taught him to suspect the purity of all motives. A little genuine humility, a moderate degree of success, achieved in some other way than by attacking and overpowering antagonists, would have made him a happier, wiser and better man. He dreaded power in others, because, as he confessed to me, he knew its baneful effects upon himself. He had no faith in men, because he knew how terrible would be the consequences if no obstacle stood between men and the accomplishment of their secret desires. He startled me one day by saying: "How long do you think you would live if your enemies had their way with you? Perhaps you think you have no enemies, who hate you enough to kill you. You are greatly mistaken. Every man has his enemies. I have them by the thousand, and you have them, too, though not so numerous as mine. Neither your enemies nor mine would run the risk of murdering us in open day; but suppose they could kill us by simply wishing it? I should drop dead in my tracks before your eyes, and you, quiet and unknown as you are, would fall a corpse in Main street before you reached home."

He owned that this horrible thought had been put into his mind by some writer whom he had that day been reading. But it was precisely such ideas that fastened themselves in his memory. He brooded over them until they became a part of his very being. No wonder he was morbid!

Here I must stop, for I have told all, or nearly all, I know about this remarkable man. The narrative has spun out under my hand to a length very much greater than I intended when I began to write. But I have willingly allowed myself to go on, knowing as I do that every word about JOHN M. DANIEL will be read with interest in every Southern State. It is to be hoped that at some day those who were his intimate friends will do perfectly what I have done most imperfectly, for lack of knowledge on the one hand, and because of countless interruptions on the other. Written piecemeal, this sketch claims no other merit

than a faithful account of my acquaintance with its subject, and an estimate, which I deem to be just, of his character. I trust it will be viewed in this light, and that it may not provoke one harsh criticism. If Messrs. P. H. AYLETT and T. H. WYNNE, or Doctors RAWLINGS and PETTICOLAS, could be induced to attempt what I have undertaken, then the southern public would have what so many desire to see, a full length portraiture of one of the most gifted and brilliant men ever born on southern soil.

A few words about his death, and I have done. Late in January, 1865, he was attacked, the second time with pneumonia. Treated promptly by skillful physicians, his disease abated; he rallied, and was able to sit up and attend somewhat to his duties. His recovery was deemed certain. But, as the event proved, tubercles were developed both in the lungs and in the mesenteric glands. The patient gradually grew worse and was at length compelled to return to his bed. The slow weeks of winter wore themselves away. How they passed, I cannot tell, for, although I made frequent calls at the house on Broad street, I was always refused admittance. The latch-key remained unused in my pocket. Only his physicians and most intimate friends were admitted to the sick man's chamber. On one occasion, as I was told by a Kentucky member of the Confederate Congress, he sent for the Hon. R. M. T. HUNTER and one or two other prominent politicians, and told them his candid opinion—that the Cause was hopeless and that the only course left to us was, "reconstruction on the best terms we could make."

So long as his strength permitted him to take an interest in any earthly thing, he had the welfare of the southern people at heart, and his latest effort seems to have been to secure by negotiation what he was persuaded arms could not achieve. Those who outlived him can decide for themselves whether the conqueror would have kept the faith which might have been plighted at Fortress Monroe better than that which was so solemnly pledged at Appomattox Court House.

As Spring approached, his symptoms became alarming. Ere long, it was whispered on the streets that his situation was critical. Relatives and friends proffered every assistance. They

were politely but firmly told that assistance was not needed. He was not a man to be "sat up with." His only attendant was a female servant. Once or twice, perhaps oftener, he requested his faithful manager, WALKER, to sleep in an adjoining room; but WALKER was hardly warm in his bed before he was aroused by a message to the effect that Mr. DANIEL wished to see him. Hurrying on his clothes, he would go at once to the dying man's bed, where, in a feeble voice, this strange announcement would be made to him :

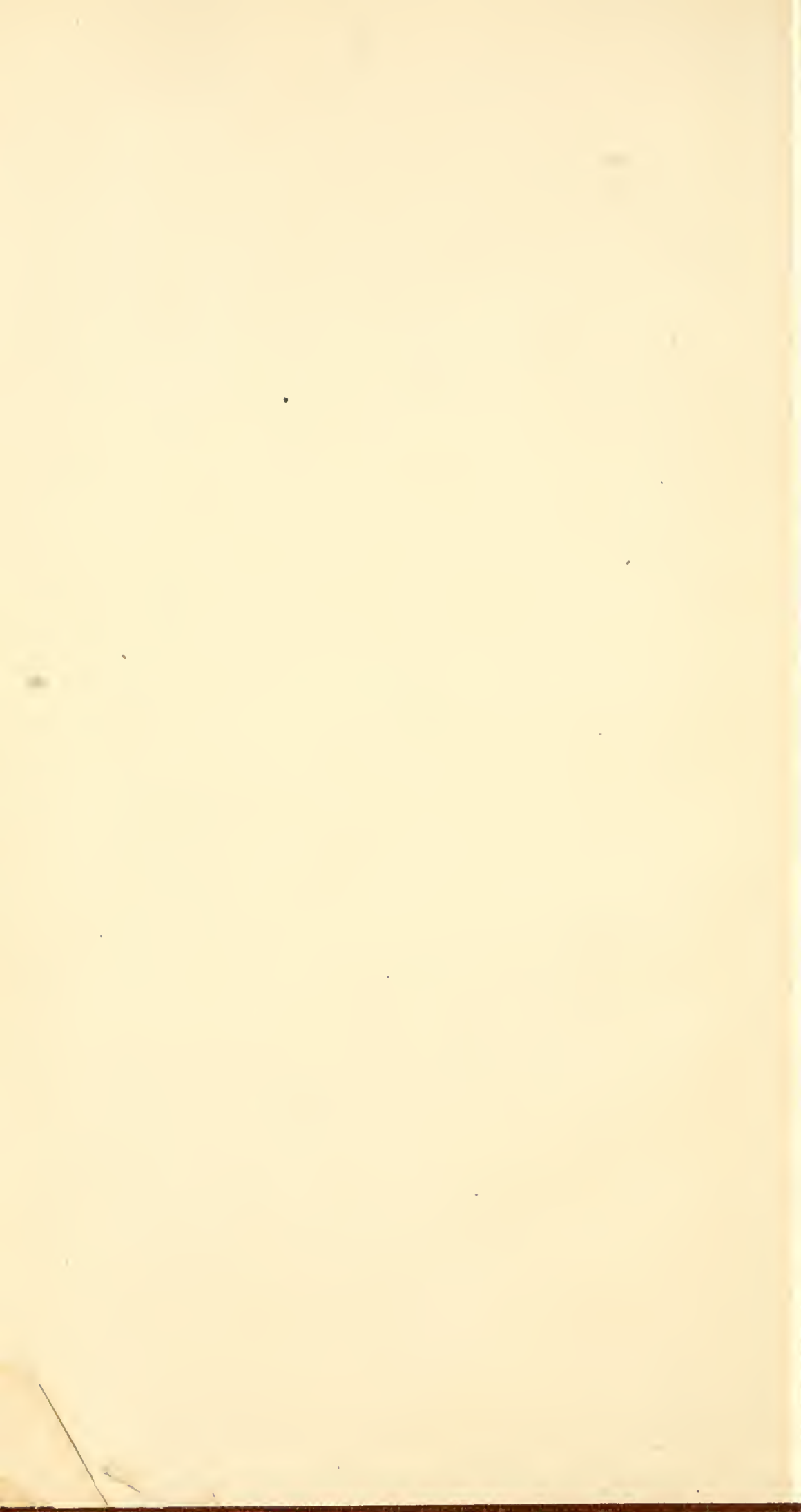
"WALKER, you must really pardon me, but the truth is, that the very fact of your being in the house makes me so nervous that I cannot rest. Please go home."

Home the manager of the *Examiner* would go, sometimes long after midnight, leaving the sufferer to his own thoughts. What those were, no man will ever tell, for none ever knew. He must have known that his days were numbered, for when he received a bouquet of the earliest Spring flowers sent him by the daughter of his friend, Mr. WYNNE, he took it in his wasted hand, returned his thanks for the gift, and then laid it aside, murmuring "too late, now; too late!"

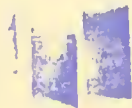
The editorial conduct of the *Examiner* had been in the exclusive charge of JOHN MITCHELL for many weeks. DANIEL no longer concerned himself about it. His will was made; he was ready to depart. His physicians knew he could not live, but they expected him to linger ten days or a fortnight longer. Plied with stimulants, he might bear up yet a good while. But the last hour was at hand. The exact circumstances of his death, as told to me, are these. On making his usual morning call, Dr. RAWLINGS found his friend's pulse sinking rapidly. No stimulant being at hand, the supply in the house having been exhausted, he dispatched a servant in all haste to get a bottle of French brandy. It was quickly brought. When it came, he proceeded forthwith to make a strong toddy. The patient was then lying close to the outer edge of the bed. Dr. RAWLINGS stood some distance off, near the window, stirring the toddy. Suddenly, his attention was aroused by a noise behind him. Looking quickly in that direction, he saw that the patient had,

by a strong effort, turned himself over and lay on his back in the middle of the bed, with his eyes closed and his arms folded on his breast. Thinking that he was praying, he would not disturb him, but continued to stir the toddy a few minutes longer, so as to give him time to finish his prayer. A sufficient time having elapsed and the need of a stimulant being urgent, the Doctor went to the bed side and leaned over.

JOHN M. DANIEL was not in this world!



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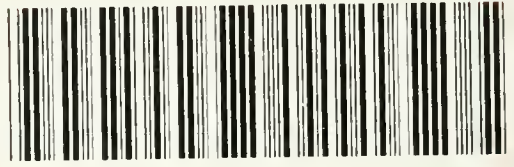


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